



**Chief Master Sergeant  
Ernest Phillips  
September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1919 - January 31<sup>st</sup>, 1975**

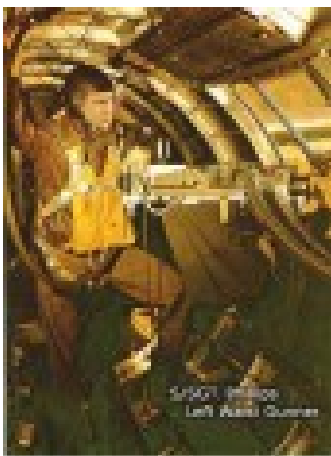
Ernest (Ernie) Phillips was born Sept. 27, 1919, in Manbar, West Virginia, to his parents George R. and Brooke Phillips. In West Virginia digging in the dirt was almost as common as the desire to fly is every young boy's dream. Young Ernie used to stand on the edge of the roof thinking that one leap would be all that it would take, arms extended, ground rushing underneath, soaring high above the clouds it was his desire to fly. Ernie was lucky to make it through the eighth grade as the middle boy of his parent's six children. His father George, at the age of 42 in 1933, was killed in a mine disaster which was very common at that time. At the age of thirteen he quit school to start helping his family. If he and his brothers were digging for the coal in the company mine they might be assured of putting food on the table that night from the company controlled stores. Buried deep underground was his spirit but in his heart was the hope that he might escape the coal mines that took his father. One historian has suggested that during World War II, a U.S. soldier had a better statistical chance of surviving in battle than did a West Virginian working in the coal mines. Ernie made up his mind not to die like his father so he joined a Depression era work program called the WPA paving streets and digging ditches. He also was trained how to work in a service station pumping gas and working on automobiles. Times were tough and it forced him to grow up fast but still he hung on to his dream to fly.

It was the outbreak of war in Europe that fueled his desire and his dream. And when the time came no one ever questioned why their

country needed them they just answered the call even those in the minefields of West Virginia.

Ernie joined the United States Army<sup>1</sup> on July 11, 1940 and was sent to Fort Thomas, KY for induction and boot camp. He graduated from Bakers and Cooks school on July 31, 1941 where he learned to become a damn good Cook. It was the attack of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese on Dec. 7, 1941 when the United States officially entered the war that changed Ernie forever. He wanted to do more for his country so he leaped at the thought of flying as the call was put out for air crews. He requested Ariel Gunnery school and graduated Nov. 16, 1942. He got picked for an assignment to a heavy bombardment group destined for foreign service. He transferred to the Army Air Force and after completing his basic training he was assigned to become a member of an aircrew with the 390<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group and his chance to fly.

The 390<sup>th</sup> Bomb group was born in October of 1942 at Geiger Field, Spokane, WA from the 34th Bomb Group which became the parent group of the 390th. Weather conditions in Washington prevented the group from meeting training requirements so on Dec. 8, 1942 the squadron was moved to Blythe, California and became the 390th Bomb Group at Blythe Army Air Base. Upon completing their initial training these crews were assigned to a heavy bombardment group destined for air offensives over Europe. They boarded merchant ships and were shipped out to join their planes overseas on the other side of the Atlantic. They were processed at either Stone or Valley, Wales, enroute to Framlingham, England, which became the wartime home and air base of the 390<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group part of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force.



Ernie had been promoted to the rank of Staff Sergeant and was ordered to serve as an aerial left waist gunner with the aircrew of Capt. Hiram C. Skogmo with the 568<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron part of the 390<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. His first plane was a B-17G flying fortress one of the most famous planes of World War II and also one of the most dangerous as Ernie was soon to learn as this plane was to make only 3 combat missions before it was shot down. His plane,<sup>2</sup> Serial Number 231122, was accepted from Boeing Aircraft Corp. Seattle, WA on Sept. 20, 1943 it was modified for war at Cheyenne

Modification Center on Sept. 22, 1943 and shipped to Framlingham, England.

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<sup>1</sup> Enlisted Record and Report of Separation, Honorable Discharge, WD AGO Form 53 and 55.

<sup>2</sup> 390<sup>th</sup> Memorial Museum, Tucson, AZ Website:  
<http://www.390th.org/aircraft/aircraft.htm>



The B-17G<sup>3</sup> model was powered by four Wright-Cyclone 1820 cubic inch 9-cylinder radial air-cooled 1200 hp engines designed for high altitude flying. It had a wingspan of 103 feet 9 inches, a length of 74 feet 9 inches, and a height of 19 feet 1 inch. Fully loaded it

weighed about 65,000 pounds and had a maximum speed of 263 mph at 25,000 feet. It carried a bomb load of 4000 pounds to 6000 pounds, was loaded with 2800 gallons of 100-octane gasoline, and had a range of about 1850 miles. The engines delivered power to three-bladed constant speed propellers. Engines turned at 1800 rpm at a typical cruising speed of 160 mph. Take off speed was about 110 mph with engines turning at 2500 rpm, and landing speed was about 80 mph.



The B-17G was equipped with twelve 50-caliber machine guns: two chin turret guns under the nose; two cheek guns, one on each side of the nose; two top turret guns behind the cockpit; two ball turret guns under the mid-section of the fuselage; two waist guns, one on

each side behind the wing; and two tail guns. Because of this heavy armament as a protection against enemy fighters, the B-17 soon became known as the "Flying Fortress".

For an added protection against enemy fighters, combat missions were flown with the B-17's flying in close formation. In close formation flying, a crew of nine operated the B-17: a pilot, a co-pilot, a navigator, a bombardier, a radio operator, a flight engineer-top turret gunner, a ball turret gunner, a waist gunner, and a tail gunner. In training and on some combat missions, a second waist gunner was added making a crew of ten.

Bombs were dropped at altitudes ranging from 20,000 feet to 30,000 feet. The inside of the B-17 was not pressurized, so it was necessary for each crew member to wear an oxygen mask at altitudes above 10,000 feet. Some heat was delivered to the inside of the airplane from the exhaust heat of the engines, but the crew members wore electrically heated clothing to protect themselves from high altitude temperatures often as much as 50 degrees below zero. Each B-17 was

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The B-17 "Flying Fortress" By Martin Kelley Presswood (Pilot - 570th) and "Flying Fortress" By Edward Jablonski

equipped with an autopilot and a Norden bombsight. The two were interconnected in such a manner so that on a bomb run the bombsight took over the flying of the airplane to assure that a constant airspeed, a constant altitude, and a proper heading were maintained. This enabled the bombardier to program the information into the bombsight, and once it was aimed at the target the sight would stay fixed on the target as the B-17 moved toward the target. At the proper time based on the altitude and the speed of the airplane, the bombsight would automatically trigger the release of the bombs. On a clear day when the enemy target was plainly visible, this amazing bombsight made it possible to bomb military targets of the enemy with pinpoint accuracy from altitudes as high as 30,000 feet.

The first combat mission for this plane was to be the famous Regensburg Mission<sup>4</sup> over the Messerschmitt aircraft factories that made the German fighter planes the Me 109 and Me 110. This combat mission was made famous because it was the first to fly deep into German territory and then to fly on to an Allied airfield in Telergma, Algeria about 30 miles from the ancient city of Constantine in North Africa. Of the 146 B-17's dispatched that morning of Aug. 17, 1943 to bomb Regensburg only 122 planes bombed the primary target, 24 planes were missing with 38 men killed, 133 prisoners of war, 13 evaded the enemy on land, 40 rescued from sea. The 390<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group dispatched 20 B-17's and lost 6 planes in combat with 2 men killed, 29 prisoners of war and 20 rescued from sea.

Ernie survived his first mission as their plane landed late that night with no extra fuel at the airfield in Telergma. It was here that the crew of Capt. Skogmo spent six days and nights in blazing heat with their plane's shadow as their only shade. There were no facilities or ground crew support for all the planes which flew in from the Regensburg mission so the aircrews had to service and repair their own planes for the trip back to England. They slept under the wings and bartered with the local Arabs for booze, trinkets and other local goods. After flying home to England the Squadron Commander Robert O. Good gave Capt. Skogmo's plane it's nickname which was painted on the side of the fuselage by the aircrew, "***Six Nights in Telergma*** (Arabian Nights) " .

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<sup>4</sup> "The Schweinfurt-Regensburg Mission" American Raids on 17 August 1943, *By Martin Middlebrook*



The second mission was on Oct. 9, 1943 over the aircraft assembly plant and airfield where they made Focke-Wulf 190's for the German Luftwaffe Air Force at Bremen, Germany. It was during debriefing<sup>5</sup> that Capt. Skogmo reported his own problems over Bremen. Playing tag with death on a narrow catwalk in

the bomb bay of his fort, "***Six Nights in Telergma***," bombardier 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. M.M. Cloud cleared a jam of nine dangerous incendiary bombs sparing himself, his crew and their Fortress from possible destruction.



The pilot, Skogmo, said, "I glanced back from the pilots seat and watched Cloud wrestling with the touchy fire bombs. The wind was roaring up into the bay, and the engineer, S/Sgt. R.

Sindeldecker, held Cloud down to keep him from falling off the catwalk. I kept yelling, "Are

they gone yet?" and Cloud would answer back, "There go two", then, "There go two more."

**Capt. Skogmo (With life vest and his aircrew (Ernie 3<sup>rd</sup> from left.)**

Finally, "Bombs away!" and he knew the bay was clear. The biggest danger was the possibility of flax entering the open bomb bay and exploding among the bombs. We've have been so much confetti if that had happened."



The third mission<sup>6</sup> would be their last. On Dec. 11, 1943 they were to be the lead plane on a mission to bomb the German submarine yards at Emden, Germany. The lead plane of the mission would be "***Six Nights in Telergma***," piloted by Capt. Skogmo. It carried 11 men that day, including the strike leader, Major Ralph V. Hansel, Group Operations Officer of the

390<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group who rode as Co-pilot. The Group Navigator, Capt. Donald S. Warren, was the eleventh man. Due to a strong headwind

<sup>5</sup> "The "Magic" 1,000-Foot Circle" Eighth Air Force Precision Bombing, *By Robert H. Hodges*

<sup>6</sup> "Loneliest and Happiest Point in One's Life", *By Irving Lifson, Squadron Navigator, 568<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron*

that day the bombers arrived at their target before the rendezvous with their fighter escort of American P-47's. "Fighters at one o'clock high", yelled the turret gunner as they were hit by a frontal attack of Messerschmitt ME 110 firing air-to air rockets causing the plane to catch on fire and out of control in seconds. Seven parachutes were reported as seen by other Allied aircraft. The Co-pilot, Hansel tried to climb out the Co-pilot's window but was unsuccessful. Cloud, Lifson and Warren jumped out of the navigator's escape hatch while Ernie was blown through the waist gunners open window. Capt. Lifson and Warren landed by parachute on the German Frisian island of Nordersey where Lifson was captured by German Marines who frisked him and took his wristwatch and cigarette lighter. They ordered him to pick up his parachute and walk to an observation tower where they shared cigarettes until a German officer showed up who struck his hand with a swagger stick and said in perfect English, "Stand at attention. There is a German Officer here now." He asked for his rank and when Lifson said, "Captain," he struck him across the face with his swagger stick and said, "You're lying, you want to get to an Officer's Prison Camp". On the way to the jail on the little island he was asked to identify the body of S/Sgt. R. Sindeldecker. Capt. Warren and another Sergeant from another Group was there as fellow inmates to greet him but Capt. Skogmo and 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Cloud didn't survive the fall from parachuting. Everyone else on the plane were killed in action. Lifson, Warren and the Sergeant were forced to carry their chutes as they were taken by boat to the mainland. German civilians would come up to them and spit on them saying, "For you the war is over." They were beginning to know what it was like to be a captive for now they had lost their war. They spent the night on a cement floor only to be awakened by kicks from a Luftwaffe pilot who claimed to have shot them down. He yelled that American equipment was shizen compared to German but nevertheless he took their leather A2 jackets. After interrogation at the infamous Dulag Luft, aircrew interrogation center in Oberussel, Germany, they were taken to an American Army Aircore officer's prison camp called Stalag Luft I where they spent the next 17 months.

Ernie's life changed the moment he was blown out the left waist gunner's window and began to fly. He was apart from everything, he wasn't remembering it so much as reliving it.<sup>7</sup> As he came down in his parachute and all around were Allied aircraft and all below were enemy ships and here he came, falling, along with others from his crew<sup>8</sup>. Falling. Gliding. And then he hit the cold water of the North

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<sup>7</sup> "The Jury", The People vs Juan Corona, *By Victor Villasenor*

<sup>8</sup> Missing Air Crew Report # 1583, Listed as Killed in Action (KIA): Capt. Hiram Skogmo, Pilot; Major Ralph Hansel, Co-Pilot; 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Merle Cloud, Bombardier; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Whitney Poythress, Tail Gunner; T/Sgt. Johnnie Adams, Radioman; T/Sgt. Patrick Welsh, Right Waist Gunner; S/Sgt. Ralph Sindeldecker, Top Turret Gunner; S/Sgt.

Sea, His huge sheep-lined flight jacket absorbed a ton of water and he was sinking fast, deeper and deeper, when suddenly the lines of his chute tightened and jerked him upward. Breaking the surface he gasped and saw that his chute was caught in the wind like a sail and it was taking him, gliding him over the water, and now the wind was coming through his huge jacket and he was freezing and beginning to lose the feeling in his legs, his whole body, and then the numbness began at the back of his head and he was losing consciousness as the chute continued taking him out to sea. There was nothing he could do. He was helpless. He weighed a ton and this numbness, this state of not feeling, had consumed his whole body and it was now spreading to his skull and his head was going numb too. He was face up and only his eyes seemed to remain functioning and he could see the sky and the sky was a beautiful blue and it was filled with planes. Two boys in a small skiff were in his path and his parachute blew directly over their skiff saving him from being blown out to sea. They fished him out of the freezing water and removed his frozen clothing and wrapped his body in dry canvas. Then a German rescue-boat<sup>9</sup>, the "*Hamburg*" under the rescue-area command of L5 Wilhelmshafen retrieved Ernie from the two boys near the island Langeoog and took him prisoner. On the mainland the Germans loaded him and other American prisoners in the back of an open flatbed truck. Ernie was barely awake and his naked body was so frozen, the German guards would stab him in the buttocks with their bayonets to force him to move, while civilians from the village cursed and threw snowballs at them. But it made no difference to Ernie whether the snowballs struck his body or missed because he was so numb. Only his eyes and brain were still functioning, but when he got to prison camp, it got so bad that even his eyes and brain quit functioning. The human species could do that when things got too terrible. The eyes and brain could turn off like a safety valve, preserving one's sanity.

Ernie and other prisoners were taken to the German Evaluation Center, Dulag Luft at Oberursel, Germany where all American aircrews would first be sent for processing. Here they would be strip searched, placed in solitary confinement and interrogated by the Germans. The interrogators would try to break down the prisoners minds to find out facts about Allied air strength, crew members and any other personal facts that could be used against other prisoners to learn military information. Ernie gave them his name, rank and serial number<sup>10</sup> as required by the Geneva Convention and was sent to a

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Jack Fariss, Ball Turret Gunner. Taken Prisoners of War (POW): Capt. Irving Lifson, Squadron Navigator; Capt. Donald Warren, Group Navigator and S/Sgt. Ernest Phillips, Left Waist Gunner.

<sup>9</sup> Telegram from the German Evaluation Center, Dulag Luft, Oberursel, Germany, Dec. 15, 1943.

<sup>10</sup> Report on Capture of Members of Enemy Air Forces, sent to Allied Command by Germany, Dec. 14, 1943.



prisoner of war camp, possibly Stalag 17B in Krems, Austria. Ernie never spoke again about being a prisoner of war to anyone, as if it never happened.

There is no known record of where Ernie was from Dec. 16, 1943 until he was liberated by Allied Forces on May 3, 1945. The only conformation that is known at this time is a single statement from the National Archives and Records Administration, "We were able to determine that he was kept at Stalag 17B". During the showing of the 1970's television series of "Hogan's Heroes", Ernie once told his daughter Gayle, that he was there during the war at Stalag 17.

The following information is from Military Intelligence and other wonderful stories<sup>11</sup> that were written down by other former Prisoners of War or "Krieges", (Kriegesgefangenen, German for War Prisoner) as they called themselves.

The German POW system separated officers from enlisted men and sent them out to the various camps, which were know as Stalag Lufts. These airmen's camps were administered by the German Luftwaffe and the Abwehr. Once inside the prison or "the wire" as it was called, the new Kriegesgefangenen or "Kriegie" was once more among his own. At Stalag Lufts I and III and VIIA, Air Force Officers were sent. At Stalag Lufts VI, IV and 17B, enlisted airmen or Non-Commissioned Officers, like Ernie were sent.

At Stalag 17B, under the command of German Commandant Oberst Kuhn, there were 12 compounds where 29,794 prisoners of war of various nationalities were detained. The Americans occupied five compounds the others Italians, Russians, French and Serbs. Each American compound contained four double barracks 100 by 240 feet. The barracks were built to accommodate 240 men, but at least 400 men were crowded into them after the first three months of occupancy. Each double barrack contained a washroom of six basins in the center of the building. The beds in the barracks were triple decked, and each tier had four compartments with one man to a compartment, making a total of 12 men in each group. Each single barrack had a stove to supply heat and cooking facilities for approximately 200 men. The fuel ration for the week was 54 pounds of coal. Because of the lack of heating and an insufficient number of blankets called "thin tablecloths", the men slept two to a bunk for added warmth. Lighting facilities were very poor, and many light bulbs were missing at all times. Two separate wire fences charged with electricity surrounded the area and four watchtowers equipped

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<sup>11</sup> Wartime stories of Former Prisoners of War (POW's) Websites: <http://www.ax-pow.com/> ; <http://home.att.net/~merkki/> ; <http://www.b24.net/pow/index.htm> ; <http://members.fortunecity.com/aries78/> ; <http://www.fsu.edu/~ww2/>



with machine guns were placed at strategic points. At night streetlights were used in addition to the searchlights from the guard towers to illuminate the area.

The treatment at Stalag 17B was never considered good, and was at times even brutal. An example of extreme brutality occurred in early 1944. Two men attempting to escape were discovered in an out of bounds area. And as they were discovered, they threw up their hands in surrender and were executed on the spot. Another mentally sick POW in a fit of mental derangement tried to climb over the fence and was shot in the heart. There were cases of guards striking POW's with bayonets, pistols and rifle butts. Protests to the commandant were always useless.

Food at the Stalag was rationed causing malnutrition among the prisoners. The daily ration would contain some rotten potatoes some black bread and a cup of barley soup. No eating utensils were issued the first 3 months and then every third POW was given a bowl and one spoon. Red Cross Food Packages were sent to every POW but the guards would only hand out one to every six prisoners. There was some incoming mail and parcels from home but it was censored, brief and very irregular. Clothing was very unsatisfactory and shoes were a major problem. The morale of the POW's was kept high by the successes of the Allies armies in the war and the recreational and educational activities within the camp by POW instructors.

February, 1944, most camps were evacuated in the face of the Russian troop advances. Many thousands of prisoners were "on Road" for periods up to 86 days. Only Stalag Luft I remained intact, until liberated in May, 1945. On April 8, 1945, 4000 of the American POWs at Stalag 17B began an 18-day march of 281 miles to Braunau, Austria. The remaining 200 men were too ill to make the march and were left behind in the camp hospitals. These men were liberated on 9 May 1945 by the Russians.

The marching column was divided into eight groups of 500 with an American leader in charge of each group, guarded by about 20 German Volkssturm guards and two dogs. Red Cross parcels were issued to each man in sufficient amounts to last about seven days. During the 18-day march, the column averaged 20 kilometers each day. At the end of the day, they were forced to bivouac in open fields, regardless of the weather<sup>12</sup>. They slept outside and ate dandelion weeds and sour grass. Some of the men only had wooden clogs or used anything they could strap to their feet. On three occasions the men were quartered in cow barns. The only food furnished to POWs by the German authorities was barley soup and bread. Trading with the German and Austrian civilians became the main source of

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<sup>12</sup> Ernest Phillips told Tracy Kidder that he was forced march over mountains covered with snow that was "ass-high to a tall monkey". "The Road to Yuba City" By Tracy Kidder

sustenance after the Red Cross parcel supplies were exhausted. The destination of the column was a Russian prison camp 4 kilometers north of Braunau. Upon arrival, the POWs cut down pine trees and made small huts, since there was no housing available. Roaming guards patrolled the area and the woods surrounding the area, but no escape attempts were made because it was apparent that the liberation forces were in the immediate vicinity. On May 3, 1945 the camp was liberated when men of the United States Army 13<sup>th</sup> Armored Division arrived. Most POW's were repatriated at Camp Lucky Strike in LeHavre, France which was a staging area for men to be shipped back to the United States.



Ernie was shipped back to the United States and arrived back on home soil on May, 29, 1945. He was separated from military service and given a separation check of \$172.55 on Aug. 14, 1945 at Fort Bragg, SC. Ernie didn't want to go back to West Virginia so he reenlisted in the Army Air Corp. which soon became the Department of the Air Force which began operating as a separate entity on Sep. 18, 1947.

He married Ada Leona Smith on June 8, 1946 at Camp Kearns, Salt Lake City, UT. Together they had five children Sandra Jeane, Maureen, Nadine Gayle, Ernest Edward and Lisa Kaye.



On Nov. 10, 1950 under the War Claims Act of 1948 an award of \$510 was made to Ernie to cover the period of imprisonment and/or internment, etc. from Dec. 11, 1943 to May 3, 1945.

Ernie retired from a career in the U.S. Air Force after giving his country 28 years and 6 months of his life's service at the rank of Chief Master Sergeant at Travis Air Force Base, CA. He and Ada made Vacaville, CA their home. Ernie knew that cancer had started to attack his body but just wanted time to enjoy the remainder of his life. Ernie never blamed his captivity for any conditions which now faced him. He was the perfect soldier, always following orders and never complaining about anything which might have put his career or family in jeopardy.



Ernie was enjoying his retirement when he got a summons for jury duty. He would end up being part of the jury and later the Foreman of the Jury for the trial of Juan Corona<sup>13</sup> who was accused of killing 25 migratory workers in the farm fields near the Yuba area of CA. At the time this happened in 1971 it was the largest mass murder in the United States. The trial lasted from Sept. 11, 1972 until the jury deliberations from Jan. 11

to Jan. 18, 1973. On the last day of the trial Ernest Phillips gave the verdict of guilty of murder in the first degree to the judge and then announced the verdict of guilty to the major news networks outside the court house.

Ernie entered David Grant Medical Hospital at Travis AFB on Jan. 14, 1975 and died on Jan. 31, 1975 from rectal cancer which may be linked to the malnutrition of being a POW during the war. He was buried at Vacaville-Elmira Cemetery on Feb. 4, 1975<sup>14</sup>.

After Ernie's death in 1989 we applied for and got Ernie's POW medal from the U.S. Air Force; 44 years after the fact, for him and his widow Ada Phillips. When the medal was taken down to the jewelry store the engraver was so proud to be touching a POW medal that he did it for no charge. Today Ada is a lifetime member of the American Ex-Prisoners of War.

Victor Villaseñor wrote in his book, "The Jury", about the trial of Juan Corona the following quote by Ernie. "Listen," continued Ernie, "and listen carefully—no one, and I mean no one is going to ridicule another person's sense of reality. I've been there and I think everyone of us has been there if we are truthful. I was there in a German concentration camp. Believe me, the human mind can only take so much and that I'll tell you." And then Ernie growled like the ex-sergeant he was, saying, "And if you don't think I can back up what I say, remember this, buddy, I fell into a fox hole with five live Germans in my day and not one came out alive!" And there Ernie held...a long time, breathing, eyeing, saying no more: then finally he turned and walked away.

Ernie never talked to us, though we wished he had, about his days as a prisoner of war and to this day not much is known. I felt that his story of the fox hole was his way of feeling some control or revenge over the memories of what being a prisoner did to him but who really knows? Ernie's story is an attempt to recreate and preserve the stories of the past so that we will remember what the glory of everyday heroes will do for our future..

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<sup>13</sup> Books about the Juan Corona Trial: "The Jury" By Victor Villaseñor; "The Road to Yuba City" By Tracy Kidder; "Burden of Proof" By Ed Cray and "Too Much Blood" By Bill Talbitzer.

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Ernie's story is not in his words but in the words of others that have gone before him. To their honor we are truly grateful for their sacrifices and to our great country for which they gave their lives.

Ernie is with his aircrew on that spiritual plane they called, "***Six Nights in Telergma***", and now he can really fly, as he dreamed when he was a young boy, for he is no longer a prisoner. He is finally free.



**"SACRIFICE NEVER FORGOTTEN"** *By Tom Nielson*

Vacaville Reporter, Feb. 3, 1975. **Obituaries:** Ernest Phillips of 567 Buckeye St. died last week at David Grant Medical Center at Travis AFB following an extended illness. He was 55. Funeral arrangements are pending at McCune Garden Chapel. Born in Manbar, West Virginia, Phillips joined the Air Force in 1940 and retired as Chief Master Sergeant after a 29 year career. During World War II, his plane was shot down and Phillips was held prisoner for 2 1/2 years in a German prison camp. He was also a veteran of the Korean War. In 1972 Phillips served as Foreman of the Jury in the Juan Corona mass murder trial in Fairfield, CA. He is survived by his widow, Ada and five children, Sandra Ahrens of Fairfield, Maureen Watson of Vacaville and Nadine Gayle, Ernest Edward and Lisa Kaye Phillips all of Vacaville, CA; his mother Brooke Phillips of Chapmanville, WV; two brothers, Ray Phillips of Roanoke, VA and George Phillips of Asland, KY; two sisters, Violet Ferrell of Dayton, OH and Mildred Nelson of Chapmanville, WV. Also surviving are two grandchildren, Michelle Ahrens and Brian Watson.

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